

cord its strong feelings of repugnance to a statute, which permits the woman who has quickened, to plead pregnancy in bar of execution; whilst the same individual, though equally the mother of a living child, but not having quickened, must suffer the extreme penalty of the law; thus making a distinction where there is no difference, and fatally, though ignorantly, sacrificing an innocent life with that of the guilty parent; and though not prepared on the present occasion to take any decided steps, the Association fully recognises its obligation to adopt at some future time such measures as will, it trusts, lead to the abrogation of a law, cruel in its effects, inconsistent with the progress of knowledge and civilization, and consequently revolting to the feelings and claims of humanity."—*Edinburgh and London Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, September, 1841. T. R. B.

85. *Presence of Lead in the solids and fluids.*—In a case at King's College Hospital, London, treated by Dr. BUDD, where the patient had been a house painter for five years, and died from colic and epilepsy, the metal was detected in the brain by chemical analysis, "but Mr. Bowman could obtain no evidence of it by the microscope." This examination appears to have been made, from the fact stated, that in two cases observed by Devergie and Guibourt, in which lead was detected in the brain, the white matter of the organ examined under the microscope by M. Gluck, was said to be remarkably altered in its minute structure.

Dr. Budd presents the above case as an illustration of the continued effects of lead on the system. It remains in it. The poisonous preparations of lead do not pass off, or at least very sparingly, in the secretions. "In this respect, they form a striking contrast with iodide of potassium. When the latter accumulates in the blood, it produces sneezing, watery eyes, headache and a variety of other symptoms, but it passes off readily in the urine and other secretions, and at the end of two days, if no more of the medicine be given, the symptoms vanish. The poison of lead, on the contrary, remains in the system, and its effects are consequently lasting."

The fact that acetate of lead has been lately detected in the urine, confirms the idea that it is the least poisonous of the salts of this metal.

"It is stated by M. Liebig, in his work on Organic Chemistry, that sulphuric acid lemonade—a solution of sugar rendered acid by sulphuric acid—is a preservative from the injurious effects of lead; and that colic is entirely unknown in all manufactories of white lead, in which the workmen are accustomed to drink it."—*London Medical Gazette*, December, 1841. T. R. B.

86. *Chevallier on a new mode of distinguishing arsenical spots from antimonial spots.*—M. BISCHOFF, a Saxon, mentions in the *Pharmaceutisches Centralblatt*, No. 26, a mode of distinguishing arsenical spots produced by the apparatus of Marsh, from those of antimony. It is founded on the property possessed by the chlorite of soda (*liquor of Labarraque*) of dissolving the arsenical ones, whilst it does not affect the others.

Being desirous of ascertaining the value of this test, M. CHEVALLIER, associating with himself M. LABARRAQUE, prepared on various capsules 1. spots of arsenic; 2. spots of antimony; and 3. spots of antimony and arsenic; and they found that the arsenical spots disappeared instantly, when the chlorite of soda came in contact with them—that the antimonial spots were not altered in colour, and finally that the spots consisting of a mixture of the two, lost a portion of the colour, owing as they suppose, to a solution of the arsenic in the chlorite of soda. This was confirmed by taking the chlorite laying on these spots, adding muriatic acid, and then passing a stream of sulphuretted hydrogen through it. A precipitate of sulphuret of arsenic was obtained, which was entirely soluble in ammonia.

MM. Chevallier and Labarraque propose to continue these observations, and to ascertain whether it is not possible by means of the chlorite of soda to

separate arsenic from its combinations with other metals.—*Bulletin of the Royal Academy of Medicine, meeting of the 14th of December, 1841.* T. R. B.

87. *Nicotine*.—*Paris Academy of Sciences*, February 7th, 1842.—M. BARRAL read an extract of a memoir on some experiments made by him on tobacco, and on the extraction of *nicotine*, a substance discovered by Vauquelin in 1809. M. Barral had succeeded in obtaining this substance in a state of purity and had analyzed it. He found it to be a powerful alkali, under the form of a liquid, with a very low equivalent, and therefore capable of great saturation, as compared with other vegetable alkalies. It was also a very energetic poison, and taken in feeble doses, was found to produce almost instantaneous death.—*Athenæum*, February 19, 1842. T. R. B.

88. *Ergot*.—Some recent notices concerning this substance, deserve a brief summary. Mr. Quekett, who has already investigated the cause of its formation, and who, from numerous observations, attributed it to the grain becoming infested with a parasitic fungus, but left the question in doubt, as to the method by which this singular formation probably originates, is now of opinion, from several experiments made by him, that "the absorption of the sporules of the fungus, by the fibres of the root of the germinating grain, will be found to be the true cause of this singular production, and that when they arrive at the grain, they convert it into the body known as the Ergot."

By exposing wheat and barley, as well as rye to the influence of this fungus, the latter was affected, and the two former not. It is particularly liable to this disease, and that it becomes so, arises either from constitutional properties or its anatomical peculiarities.

M. Bonjean of Chambéry has investigated the nature of ergot. He is of opinion, that if gathered on the first day of its formation, it is not so poisonous as when taken on the sixth—that a heat of 212° Fah. also injures its poisonous properties, as does also fermentation. He has discovered two active principles in it. One is the oil of ergot, of an acrid flavour, yellowish colour, soluble in cold ether and boiling alcohol. It possesses poisonous properties in a high degree. The author considers that twelve grammes of this oil are equivalent to thirty-two grammes of the ergot of rye. A high heat, however, destroys these violent properties, and converts it into a resin. It is better therefore to prepare it with cold ether. The second is the aqueous extract which is obtained by treating the powder, deprived of its oil or not, with water. It is brown, of a thick consistence and musty smell. It is soluble in water, and can be formed into mixtures, syrups and pills. It is not at all poisonous, but possesses *anti-hæmorrhagic properties*.—*London Medical Gazette*, October 1841, and January, 1842. T. R. B.

89. *Suicide from Asphyxia by choking, from the introduction of a firm plug into the fauces*.—Mary Ann Palmer, a female in good health, aged 29 years, was found dead in her sleeping apartment. The cavities of the head, chest and abdomen were examined, and the medical certificate was that she had died of (simple) apoplexy. The body was received by Dr. HANDYSIDE, Lecturer on Surgery at Edinburgh, for public dissection, in accordance with the provisions of the Anatomy Act.

Dr. Handyside noticed the appearance of the brain, but found nothing adequate to account for death. Twenty-six days after receiving the body, he had occasion to demonstrate the muscular structure of the pharynx, and for this purpose, introduced his finger into the back part of the mouth, in order to stuff that cavity with hair. But he found that space already pre-occupied by a dense foreign substance, apparently round in form, and impacted between the root of the tongue and the soft parts, so very firmly, as to have cut off the supply of air to the lungs, by forcibly closing the mouth, and posterior nares.

He dislodged this body with considerable difficulty, and found it to consist of portions of soft cotton, called spindle ends. These were recognized by the par-